

CHAPTER  
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## CHAPTERS IN BRIEF

# *The Muslim World Expands, 1300–1700*

## Summary

**CHAPTER OVERVIEW** A group of Turks called Ottomans set up a new empire in what is now modern Turkey. Farther to the east, the Safavid Empire arose in modern Iran, where rulers embraced a special type of Islam that made them different from their neighbors. Meanwhile, India saw the rise of yet another empire as Muslims created a powerful state there.

## 1 The Ottomans Build a Vast Empire

**KEY IDEA** The Ottomans established a Muslim Empire that combined many cultures and lasted for more than 600 years.

In 1300, the world of the eastern Mediterranean was seeing changes. The Byzantine Empire was fading. The Seljuk Turk state had been destroyed by the Mongols. Anatolia, the area of modern Turkey, was now inhabited by groups of nomadic Turks. They saw themselves as ghazis, or warriors for Islam. They formed military groups and raided the lands where non-Muslims lived.

The most successful ghazi was Osman. Western Europeans took his name to be Othman and called his followers Ottomans. Between 1300 and 1326, Osman built a strong but small kingdom in Anatolia. Leaders who came after Osman called themselves sultans, or “ones with power.” They extended the kingdom by buying land, forming alliances with other chieftains, and conquering everyone they could. The military success of the Ottomans was aided by gunpowder—especially as used in cannons.

The Ottomans ruled kindly through local officials appointed by the sultan. Muslims had to serve in the army but paid no taxes. Non-Muslims paid the tax but did not have to serve in the army. Many joined Islam simply to avoid the tax. Most people in their empire adjusted quickly to their easy rule.

One warrior did not. Timur the Lame, called Tamerlane in the west, arose in central Asia. He claimed to be descended from Genghis Khan. The claim probably is not true—but he was as fierce as the Mongol conqueror. He conquered Russia and Persia, where he burned the city of Baghdad to the ground. In 1402, he defeated the Ottomans in battle and captured the sultan. Timur died three years later on his way to conquer China.

Back in Anatolia, the four sons of the last sultan fought for control of the empire. Mehmed I won

control, and his son and the four following sultans brought the Ottoman Empire to its greatest power. One of them—Mehmed II—took power in 1451 and captured Constantinople. At first, his ships were unable to sail near the city because barriers blocked the way. So he had his soldiers drag the ships over hills so they could be launched on another side of Constantinople. After several weeks of fighting, the Ottoman force was simply too strong for the tiny army left in the city. In 1453, Constantinople finally fell to the Ottomans. Mehmed made the city his capital, which was renamed Istanbul. The famous and beautiful church of the Hagia Sophia became a mosque. The rebuilt city became home to people from all over the Ottoman Empire.

Other emperors used conquest to make the empire grow. After 1514, Selim the Grim took Persia, Syria, and Palestine. He then captured Arabia, took the Muslim holy cities of Medina and Mecca, and gained control of Egypt.

His son, Suleyman I, brought the Ottoman Empire to its greatest size and most impressive achievements. He conquered parts of southeastern Europe by 1525. He won control of the entire eastern Mediterranean Sea and took North Africa as far west as Tripoli. Although he was defeated in a battle for Vienna in 1529, his Ottoman Empire remained huge.

Suleyman ruled his empire with a highly structured government. Serving the royal family and the government were thousands of slaves. Among them was an elite group of soldiers called janissaries. They were Christians taken as children and made slaves with personal loyalty to the sultan. They were trained as soldiers and fought fiercely for the sultan. Other slaves held important government jobs. The empire allowed people to follow their own religion. Jews and Christians were not mistreated by the Ottomans. Suleyman revised the laws of the empire, which won him the name Suleyman the Lawgiver. Suleyman also oversaw an empire that